

Afghanistan: Six Years of Soviet Occupation



United States Department of State
Bureau of Public Affairs
Washington, D.C.

December 1985

The following report was prepared by Craig Karp, Afghanistan analyst, with the assistance of other analysts in the Bureau of Intelligence and Research and Department officials. It is a sequel to Special Report 120, "Afghanistan: Five Years of Occupation."

SUMMARY

At the end of the sixth year of the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan, the Soviet Union is no nearer to subjugating the country than before. The current military situation can best be described as a continuing stalemate, with a higher level of fighting by both the Soviets and the *mujahidin*. Both sides have adopted long-term strategies and neither has been able to defeat its adversary. Casualties were up for combatants on both sides, and possibly among civilians as well.

Afghan opposition to the Soviet occupation remains implacable. The resistance fighters, the *mujahidin*, were better armed and trained, and more effective militarily than ever before. The Soviets were unable to shut off resistance supply lines, despite a greater involvement in combat. In 1985 the resistance initiated its largest offensive operations of the war and for the first time overran an important regime military installation. Resistance groups displayed increased cooperation, and intergroup combat was probably reduced. The increase in offensive activity was the most important military development of 1985.

On the political front, the resistance made a potentially significant move toward unity with the merger of the seven principal political parties into an alliance. The alliance sent a delegation to New York for the 40th anniversary celebration of the United Nations, as part of its program to present Afghanistan's case to the world.

The Soviets adjusted their numbers, weapons, and tactics to meet the improved capabilities of the *mujahidin*. Soviet troop strength in Afghanistan increased by a few thousand to about 118,000, and they were more aggressive in the field. In 1985, Soviet losses of both men and materiel increased significantly. The war received increasing publicity inside the Soviet Union as signs of growing internal dissatisfaction with the Afghan conflict mounted.

The continued unreliability of Afghan military forces compelled the Soviets to assume a greater war burden. Opposition within the regime's own ranks was highlighted when Air Force personnel destroyed some 20 aircraft at the largest base in western Afghanistan.

The Democratic Republic of Afghanistan (DRA) staged an unconvincing version of the traditional grand national assembly, a series of tribal councils, and even a set of sham elections. These initiatives were aimed as much at an international audience as at the disbelieving Afghan people.

Unable to mobilize support, the regime remained dependent for its survival on the presence of Soviet troops. The Marxist ruling party remains split

between its Khalq and Parcham factions. Despite persistent rumors of a change at the top and some high-level reshuffling, Babrak Karmal, installed by the Soviets in 1979, remains head of state.

The U.S.S.R. continues to pursue both long- and short-term strategies aimed at consolidating control over Afghanistan. An essentially defensive short-term military strategy aimed at containing the resistance allows the pursuit of longer term political goals. Thousands of Afghans, including children, have been sent to the Soviet Union to prepare them to run a future Sovietized Afghanistan.

International opposition to the Soviet occupation intensified during the year. On the fifth anniversary of the Soviet invasion, countries around the world condemned the war on the Afghan people and expressed their support for the heroic Afghan resistance. Pakistan continued its firm support for the Afghan people, despite concerted Soviet pressure that included numerous violations by Soviet/DRA aircraft and shellings of Pakistani territory. Progress toward a negotiated settlement in the UN-sponsored proximity talks foundered on the refusal of the Kabul regime to discuss the key issue—the withdrawal of Soviet forces.

The UN General Assembly rebuffed the Soviet/DRA public relations campaign by passing for the seventh time

by overwhelming majority a resolution calling for the withdrawal of foreign forces from Afghanistan and demanding self-determination for the Afghan people. A month later the Assembly for the first time adopted a resolution passed by the UN Human Rights Committee condemning the violation of human rights in Afghanistan.

Outlook: Without a major addition of Soviet forces, the stalemate is likely to continue. The U.S.S.R. still appears to be committed to a military solution. Soviet hints of a willingness to be flexible may mask a basic condition: the maintenance of a Soviet-dominated government that the Afghan people—and and the world—reject. At the same time the will of the Afghan people to resist shows no sign of faltering.

MILITARY SITUATION

Throughout 1985, combat was at a higher level compared to previous seasonal norms. Even during the customary winter lull, it was not uncommon for fighting to occur in most of Afghanistan's 29 provinces during any given week.

Soviet forces were more aggressive and launched operations in every part of the country, focusing on efforts to disrupt resistance lines of communication. Campaigns throughout the year in the eastern provinces, and particularly the massive May-June drive into the Konar Valley, were directed to this end.

Resistance activity also was widespread; many Soviet/regime garrisons came under attack during the year. The pace of fighting escalated in the summer as the resistance took the offensive in the Panjsher Valley and in Paktia Province. In the west, the *mujahidin* were nearly able to eliminate all regime presence from Herat. Forced to respond in order to prevent major losses, the Soviets launched large-scale counterattacks. Intense combat continued into the fall.

Better armed and trained than in the past, the *mujahidin* were able to take the initiative in the fighting. Improved resistance air defense—still comprised primarily of heavy machineguns but increasingly supplemented by surface-to-air missiles—has forced the Soviets to be more cautious and to



adopt countermeasures. As a result, the impact of Soviet air power has been reduced. Convoy ambushes were increasingly effective, as a combination of improved weapons, more ammunition, and better tactics led on several occasions to the destruction of dozens of Soviet or DRA vehicles. Casualties were up on both sides, and among civilians.

One example of the war's greater intensity is the increased use of mines by both sides. As part of their efforts to impede resistance movement, the Soviets resorted to heavier use of several types of mines, particularly airdropped. The Soviets have dropped or planted an estimated 2 million mines since the invasion; these mines have probably caused more casualties to civilians than to resistance fighters. The resistance employs mines mostly to attack road convoys. On each of several occasions in 1985, the *mujahidin* knocked out dozens of Soviet/DRA vehicles. These ambushes have become more costly to the Soviets and hamper their freedom of movement.

Eastern Afghanistan

A detailed description of the year's combat follows, starting with the three major battles in eastern Afghanistan during the summer.

Konar. Barikot, an Afghan regime garrison located where the Konar River skirts the Pakistan border, has been under siege since the early days of the communist takeover in Kabul. Over the past year, even helicopter resupply became difficult because of fire from surrounding *mujahidin*. Soviet/Afghan aircraft often violated the Pakistan border to strike targets in Chitral, Pakistan, across from Barikot.

Early in the year, a combined Soviet/Afghan column attempting to relieve Barikot was forced to retreat. A rare case of frustrated Soviet movement, it was certain the Soviet 40th Army would try to overcome it with massive force. But resistance operations increased and threatened to overwhelm Barikot. By April all Afghan regime garrisons in the valley were under attack.

In May, exploiting a lull in *mujahidin* activity during the Muslim fasting month of Ramadan, the Soviets moved more than 10,000 troops with armor support up the Konar and its side valleys. The largest action since the spring 1984 offensive in the Panjsher, it was accompanied by the massive use of air power. Airborne assaults on the valley heights, although successful, sometimes encountered heavy opposition, including hand-to-hand combat. Losses on both sides were high.

The Soviets reached Barikot in about 2 weeks, relieving the besieged garrison. Almost immediately, however, they began to withdraw from the Konar Valley, turning Barikot back to the DRA. The 40th Army demonstrated that it can put large concentrations of troops almost anywhere in Afghanistan (and right up to the Pakistani border just before the June round of indirect talks in Geneva and U.S.-Soviet bilateral discussions on Afghanistan). But they could not sustain such a large presence. In the wake of the Soviet withdrawal, the *mujahidin* returned to the Konar and once again surrounded Barikot. Despite its size, the Soviet operation yielded only short-term tactical gains.

The valley was devastated by this intense use of Soviet firepower, but civilian casualties were light. Most villagers long ago had left this war zone

for nearby Pakistan. The Soviets used napalm to strip parts of the valley—one of the few heavily forested areas in Afghanistan—of natural cover. They left a virtual wall of mines in an effort to discourage resistance movement.

Panjsher. The heaviest fighting in the Panjsher Valley in 1985 did not occur until summer. Commander Ahmed Shah Mahsud was preoccupied with nearby refugees and food shortages in the wake of last year's Soviet seizure of most of the lower valley. Yet Panjsher *mujahidin* harassed Afghan and Soviet garrisons throughout the winter. In January, a Soviet/DRA column was turned back after vainly trying to relieve a besieged garrison.

In early March, the Panjsheris assaulted a garrison and caused more than 100 Soviet/DRA casualties. At the end of March, Panjsher fighters hit a Soviet munitions convoy near the Salang Pass, destroying more than 60 vehicles and tying up the vital highway for days. Surprisingly, the annual Soviet spring push into the Panjsher failed to materialize.

When the Soviets moved in late spring to cut his supply lines in the Konar, Mahsud sent his fighters down from the Panjsher hills. The *mujahidin* quickly overcame a number of regime outposts in the valley, then advanced on Peshghor, the most exposed garrison in the valley.

The Soviets responded hastily, in contrast to their more customary well-planned operational style. Soviet forces were thrown almost piecemeal into the valley, possibly to prevent the fall of garrisons further down the valley. Afghan soldiers in Kabul were drafted into duty in the Panjsher, where they faced heavy opposition and ambushes in areas presumably under regime control.

By the end of July the Soviets went on the offensive, having placed over 10,000 troops in the Panjsher. Soviet troops retook Peshghor and moved into the side valleys, taking heavy casualties. Soviet and regime wounded filled Kabul's hospitals. Air power played less of a role than in the 1984 Soviet offensive, perhaps because of the closeness of the fighting or improved insurgent anti-aircraft capabilities.

The *mujahidin* captured nearly 600 prisoners at Peshghor. Conscripts who were not considered enemies of the

resistance were paroled back to their homes. The remainder, mostly officers and perhaps a few Soviets, were held in a side valley. Hopes for a prisoner exchange were dashed when Soviet troops attacked the encampment; about 130 prisoners died.

Peshghor was an important victory, the first time the *mujahidin* have overrun a major regime garrison. The resistance had taken the initiative, forcing the Soviets to respond. When Soviet troops did reach the Panjsher Valley, the *mujahidin* stayed to fight, then retreated slowly rather than melting away when faced with superior force. Fighting in the Panjsher continued into the fall, although at a lower level. In late November, Panjsher *mujahidin* reportedly again attacked Peshghor and overwhelmed several outposts.

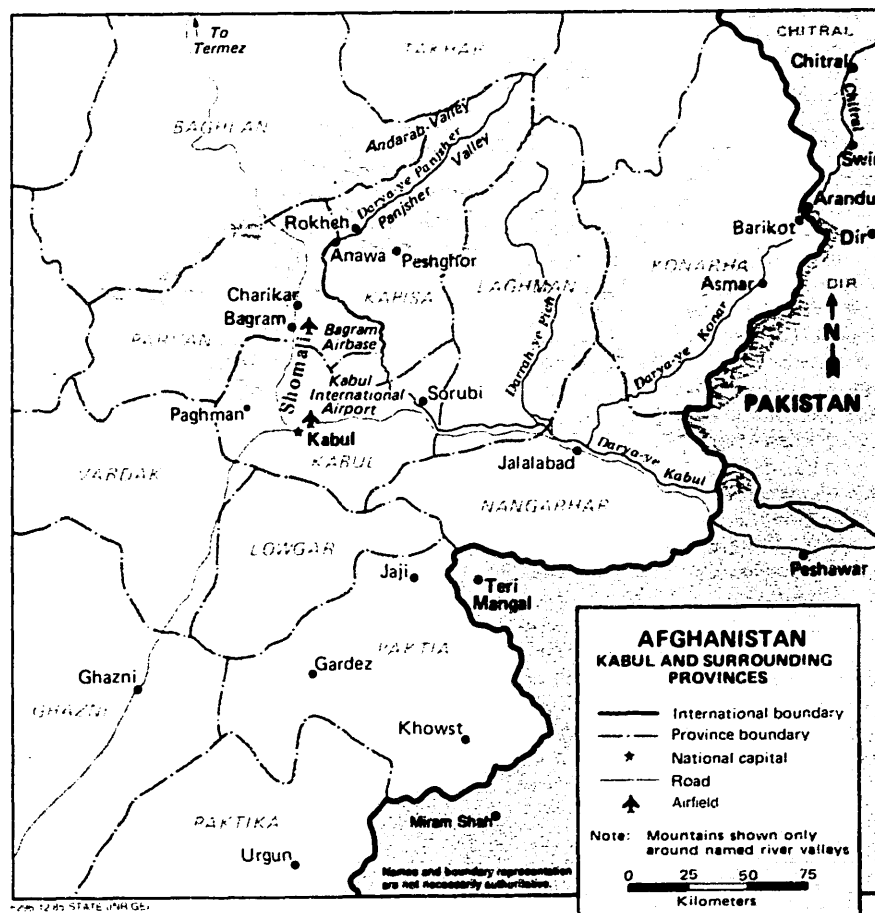
Paktia. In late summer, the heavy fighting shifted south to Paktia Province, scene of intense combat in 1984. Paktia Province borders the Parachinar salient of Pakistan extending deep into Afghanistan, its tip only about 50 miles from Kabul. All year there has been heavy fighting as the Soviets attempted

to interrupt resistance supply lines. Most bases in the eastern part of the province are manned by DRA forces and have been under continuous insurgent pressure.

In the early part of the year, fighting was concentrated in the northern part of Paktia, near Parachinar. The garrisons at Jaji/Ali Khel and Chamkani were under constant pressure. Some relief efforts arrived; others did not. In April, a large Soviet/DRA convoy traveling between the Paktia capital of Gardez and Chamkani suffered extremely severe troop and vehicle losses.

During the summer, the *mujahidin* launched a series of attacks on the garrison at Khowst, in the southern part of the province. Khowst, under siege since before the Soviet invasion, was the scene of a major battle in 1984. The Soviets, unable to get a convoy through the mountains to Khowst, must supply the town by air. Nearly all civilians left long ago.

The *mujahidin* around Khowst belong to several parties. Led by Jalaluddin Haqqani, from the *Hezbe-Islami* (Yunis Khalis faction), they joined forces



to attack the garrison. It was the largest offensive operation ever mounted by the resistance, involving perhaps 5,000 *mujahidin* in coordinated assaults. As many as half of the regime outposts around Khowst fell to the *mujahidin*. The Soviets were forced to act to prevent the fall of this isolated but strategic garrison.

Soviet/regime forces fought fiercely and overran several *mujahidin* camps in Paktia. Intense combat was accompanied by artillery and air attacks by Soviet/DRA units across the border into Pakistan. By late August, Soviet/DRA forces appeared to have ended a sweep operation south of Khowst. After a short lull, however, Soviet and regime troops staged a surprise sortie from Khowst to press the insurgents along the border. *Mujahidin* fighters, many of whom had gone to rest and recuperate in Pakistan, were recalled to the fighting.

Casualties were high on each side, in some of the bloodiest fighting of the war. Afghan and Pakistani hospitals were jammed with wounded. Several of the cooperating resistance force commanders reportedly were killed, including one of Haqqani's sons.

The Soviets and DRA were able to prevent the loss of Khowst. However, at year's end, the garrison remains surrounded by the resistance. Although unable to seize Khowst at this time, the Paktia *mujahidin* demonstrated impressive offensive capabilities, and morale remains high.

Kabul. The security situation in the capital, relatively quiet in the early part of the year, deteriorated over the summer. The Soviets devoted extensive resources to protecting themselves and the regime in Kabul—their minimum tactical goal—particularly on symbolic occasions or during important regime meetings.

The U.S.S.R. continued to develop its military infrastructure in the capital. Kabul now has checkpoints and gun and tank emplacements at all access routes. The Soviets established a second security ring of bunkers, supplemented by antipersonnel mines, to impede *mujahidin* infiltration.

A nightly curfew continues, punctuated by the sweep of searchlights from atop the city's peaks and the sounds of helicopter gunships. Kabul's sky often was lit by flares—ejected from aircraft when landing or taking off—which are

designed to confuse the *mujahidin*'s heat-seeking missiles. Bombing and rocketing of areas suspected of harboring *mujahidin* caused many civilian casualties, particularly among the internal refugees who have flocked to Kabul to escape the fighting. Since the Soviet invasion the capital's population has more than doubled to about 2 million.

The *mujahidin* launched rocket attacks around December 27, the fifth anniversary of the Soviet invasion, and there were some bomb attacks during the PDPA's 20th anniversary in early January, but the city was relatively secure. To maintain security during these internationally visible events, the regime deployed as many as 60,000 Soviet or Afghan military and police personnel in the capital.

Life became more dangerous in 1985 for the Soviets in Kabul. In late January a massive explosion at a military hospital in Kabul left a number of Soviet and regime personnel killed and wounded. Soviet personnel and their dependents were shaken by a series of resistance bombs in their customary shopping and residential areas; Soviet women were among the killed and wounded. On several occasions during the spring, Soviets were stabbed on the streets of the capital, at least one fatally.

In late April, with security precautions high before the *Loyah Jirga*, a Soviet/DRA task force surprised a *mujahidin* unit on the outskirts of Kabul, inflicting numerous casualties. That same week a Soviet/regime force captured a multiple-rocket launcher from a *mujahidin* group. Such weapons previously had not been observed in the hands of the resistance. Nevertheless, the *mujahidin* launched a spate of rocket attacks that month, including some harassing fire at the site of the *Loyah Jirga*.

On July 1, the resistance made a series of fierce and apparently coordinated attacks on the airport and Kabul's eastern suburbs. Later that week, the Soviet Embassy compound in the western suburbs was hit, reportedly killing several Soviet guards. Attacks on the embassy became so frequent that the Soviets installed a rocket launcher battery in the embassy compound, in order to return the fire. The embassy remained a target through the fall.

On July 22 the *mujahidin* launched their heaviest assault of the year, striking Kabul airbase. The sounds of combat could be heard in the city all week. In

mid-September, a series of explosions, possibly caused by a rocket attack, did major damage to the Soviet ammunition dump at Khair Khana.

The bolder, more offensive-minded tactics employed by the resistance also were seen in the capital. In early November, the *mujahidin* overran a DRA post at Abshar on Kabul's west side. After seizing the garrison's weapons, the *mujahidin* withdrew.

Paghman, west of Kabul, was the scene of several Soviet and regime operations during the year. The regime has claimed successful pacification of this area nearly a dozen times over the past 2 years. The civilian population again bore the brunt of Soviet and regime frustration. In September, residents reportedly were warned that if they did not stop supporting the resistance, their villages would be destroyed.

Shomali, north of Kabul, was the scene of almost constant Soviet and regime operations around the Kabul-Termez road. The Soviets have made the security of the capital's lifeline to the north a top priority. These efforts, however, were not enough to prevent numerous *mujahidin* ambushes, often closing the road for days. In October, a Soviet/DRA force used bulldozers to destroy all trees, crops, and houses for 125 feet on each side south of the Salang Pass, to Bagram.

Bagram Airbase, a major Soviet installation, was attacked several times by the resistance. Early in the year, the resistance claimed the downing of a Soviet/Afghan aircraft near Bagram by a surface-to-air missile.

In Vardak Province, in April, a large convoy, heavily armed with self-propelled artillery and FROG-7 long-range surface-to-surface rockets, was ambushed and forced to turn back to Kabul.

The **Nangarhar** provincial capital, Jalalabad, is reportedly one of the most secure cities in Afghanistan. Yet even Jalalabad Airbase was subject to rocket attacks. In March, the *mujahidin* took several Afghan border posts near the Khyber Pass. A few days later they withdrew, in the face of a large Soviet/DRA operation, which may have involved more than 300 armored vehicles.



Anthony S. Davis/Black Star

Resistance fighter reading the Koran.

Southern Afghanistan

In Qandahar, resistance activity all year long was higher than last year. The regime has virtually abandoned even the few posts it maintained in the bazaar. In October, a large DRA unit mutinied, killed their officers, and defected to the resistance. The government and the Soviets remain at the airport, which was periodically under attack.

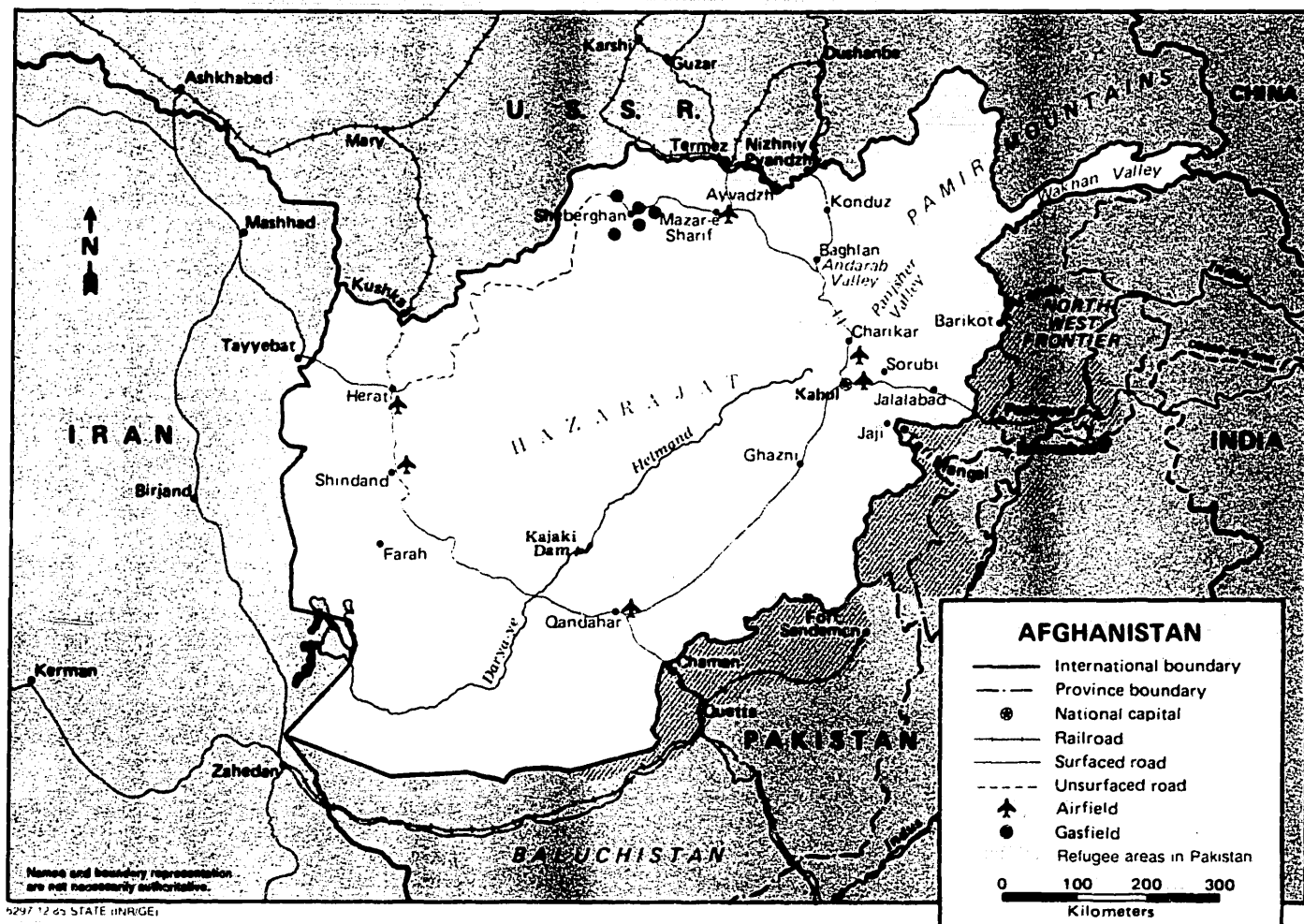
The regime gained by defection, before the *Loya Jirga*, Asmatullah Muslim Achakzai, who had commanded a *mujahidin* band called the *Fedayeen-i-Islami*. He took more than 100 men with him. In addition to cash and a bodyguard of 50 Afghan Army soldiers and several armored cars, the regime gave Asmatullah command of a tribal militia unit at Spin Baldak, on the Pakistan border near Quetta. During the summer, armor and artillery under his command fired into Pakistan, but the incident cooled after Pakistan deployed troops to the area. Qandahar resistance commanders condemned Asmatullah for defecting; at last report, he is staying under regime protection.

In February heavy fighting took place in the Arghandab Valley, north of Qandahar. In March, the *mujahidin*, in an operation remarkable for the cooperation displayed among various parties, attacked the Kajaki Dam, built with U.S. assistance before the 1978 communist coup. It was the heaviest fighting of the war in the agriculturally important Helmand Valley. The Soviets and DRA counterattacked, and fighting continued into spring and summer, with considerable casualties on both sides.

Northern Afghanistan

The tempo of fighting in northern Afghanistan was relatively lower in 1985. Several Soviet offensives took place, but none on the scale of those in the rest of the country. Soviet operations in the northeast Provinces of Konduz and Takhar resulted in a number of civilian casualties.

The resistance suffered a major setback in February, when *Jamiat-i-Islami* regional commander Zabiullah was killed by a mine that exploded under his jeep. Zabiullah had been singularly successful in extending his influence outside his



own party. His successors have not yet been able to reestablish the coordination with other resistance groups operating in the north.

However, there were continued reports of resistance attacks on targets in the north, including the pipeline that carries Afghanistan's natural gas to the Soviet Union.

Western Afghanistan

Some of the largest Soviet operations took place in western Afghanistan. They were directed primarily at preventing a resistance takeover of Herat. With a fraction of its prewar population (many have fled to nearby Iran), Herat today is a battlefield and virtual ghost town.

The resistance in Herat operates as a coalition of several parties, led by Ismail Khan, a *Jamiat-i-Islami* com-

mander who had served as a captain in the Afghan Army. At the end of 1984, Khan addressed a rally in the town of more than 1,000 people, without fear of interruption by the regime.

Although the regime is still present in Herat, it does not exercise control. A local resistance commander, dissatisfied with his role in the emerging local coalition, defected and was appointed an officer in the government militia. He was shot shortly afterward on the steps of a government building.

Beginning in June the *mujahidin* moved to assume full control of the city. Officials from Kabul appeared reluctant to go to Herat, and street fighting raged day and night. In June, the *mujahidin* tunneled under a major DRA outpost in the center of the city and exploded a massive charge, killing dozens of regime troops.

By July, the resistance was pushing regime forces out of the city. The

Soviets reportedly were forced to call in reinforcements directly from bases in the U.S.S.R. The Soviets bombed and rocketed the center of town, causing numerous civilian casualties. Although they reasserted nominal daytime control of Herat, the *mujahidin* retain a strong presence in the city.

The Soviets continued to build up their capabilities in the west. There were a number of incidents on the border with Iran in the early part of the year. In March, a Soviet convoy near Toraghundi, a major facility on the Soviet/Afghan border, suffered heavy casualties. Further south, in June, about 20 Afghan aircraft at Shindand Airbase, the largest Soviet facility in the area, were destroyed by sabotage. The resistance attacked Shindand on several other occasions in 1985.

Central Afghanistan

The remote Hazarajat, populated mainly by Shia Hazaras, has undergone major political changes since the 1978 Marxist coup, although regime presence is limited to a few isolated garrisons. Pro-Khomeini groups such as *Nasr* and *Sepah-e-Pasdaran* vanquished the traditional Shia resistance groups that had held sway since the coup. These pro-Iranian groups have moved to establish an Islamic republic in the Hazarajat. The previously dominant *Shura* party reportedly is no longer active in the region.

In a meeting in Tehran in mid-June, several pro-Iranian groups, including the independent *Harakat-Islami* of Ayatollah Mohseni, pledged to stop fighting other Afghans and direct their arms against the Soviets. Focused on internal conflict, the Hazarajat has been only marginally involved in the resistance. However, because it is free from Soviet/regime control, the town has served as an important transit route for resistance supplies. There is some indication that, having confirmed their control over the Hazarajat, the pro-Khomeini Shia may have begun to strike at the Soviets.

THE AFGHAN MILITARY

Afghan military effectiveness continued to deteriorate over the past year, despite Soviet efforts to reverse the trend. The December 1984 appointment of a Khalqi, Nazar Mohammed, to run the Ministry of Defense, has not improved the situation. Nor has a large pay increase announced in the spring. The largely Khalqi officer corps remains under suspicion by the ruling Parcham faction.

Enlisted men, mostly press-ganged conscripts, may fire when fired upon but mostly prefer not to fight the *mujahidin*. Given the opportunity, especially in combat, they desert. The resistance generally paroles them and sends them home or absorbs them into its ranks. The DRA military continues to be a major source of arms and ammunition for the resistance.

Lack of enthusiasm, combined with poor performance in combat, has made the DRA forces unreliable and forced

the Soviets to take a more direct role in the fighting. In the past year Soviet forces increasingly have gone into combat without an Afghan Army "shield," or accompanied by only a small number of Afghan troops.

Even the best DRA units have had problems. The elite 444th commando brigade, thought by many to be the Afghan Army's most effective unit, was cut to pieces when it parachuted into the Panjsher in the summer. Many of the survivors deserted. Some Afghan units, such as the garrison at Khowst, performed well; despite heavy losses, it conducted an independent offensive after Soviet forces withdrew from the area in August.

Two regime directives illustrate the difficulty Kabul has in getting Afghans to fight for the regime. In January, the politburo announced that those who "volunteer" for the army would have to serve only 2 rather than the normal 3 years required of conscripts. There is no evidence that this gesture succeeded in attracting many volunteers. Moreover, many reports describe conscripts being forced to serve beyond their required term—a major source of disaffection within the army. Four years of duty is required from those stationed in Kabul, where life is easier and relatively safe.

In the second directive, issued in the spring, the regime decreed that anyone between the ages of 18 and 38 who had not yet served would be liable for immediate callup. In the absence of effective draft registration, the law merely legitimizes conscription by press gang.

The Afghan Air Force, previously considered the most loyal service, was wracked by defection and sabotage in 1985. The June sabotage attack at Shin-dand caused the largest loss of aircraft in any single incident of the war. The episode evidently stemmed from unhappiness over the disciplining of pilots who had dropped their bombs in the desert instead of on the target village. The accused saboteurs were reportedly executed.

Air Force woes did not end with the June incident; other officers planned or executed additional acts of sabotage. In July, DRA Air Force personnel defected to Pakistan with two Afghan Mi-25 (Mi-24D) export version HIND

helicopter gunships, the first HINDs to slip out of control of Soviet forces or their clients.

KHAD. The DRA has devoted extensive resources to build the KHAD, the Afghan secret police. KHAD (the letters are a Dari acronym for State Information Service) is overseen closely by the KGB and possibly assisted by East German and other Eastern bloc security forces. It continues to acquire a reputation for brutality and torture. KHAD has grown steadily and is now almost as large as the army. Most cadres are based in Kabul, but the organization operates all over the country and abroad. By offering good salaries to those with few alternative prospects, KHAD has had some success in recruiting and retaining young urban males. Recruits appear to have little or no ideological commitment, but do become committed and loyal to the organization.

Militia. The regime also has tried to develop the militia, in areas both within and outside regime control. This approach, used by Kabul rulers for centuries, has succeeded in obtaining some nominal adherents, although there are few instances of militia actually fighting the *mujahidin*. Moreover, it is a risky tactic. Some local groups have taken the government's money and arms, then defected to the resistance.

THE SOVIETS IN AFGHANISTAN

The U.S.S.R continues to pursue both long- and short-term strategies aimed at consolidating their position in Afghanistan. The Soviet Union has acted in the short term to preserve security in the capital and a few provincial centers, to protect its supply lines, and to prevent the resistance from growing too strong or threatening secure zones. This defensive stance allows the pursuit of longer term political goals of wearing down the Afghan people's will to resist, stabilizing the government in Kabul, and developing loyal followers in the army, the government, and the party capable of running the country.

Sovietization of the economy, society, and educational system are all part of this strategy but can be implemented only in areas of Soviet and regime control. It took the Soviet Government more than a decade to subdue the *basmachi* (bandit) revolt in Central Asia

in the 1920s. The Soviets seem prepared to face the current level of conflict in Afghanistan for as long as may be necessary.

Military Developments. In 1985, the Soviets adjusted their numbers, weapons, and tactics to meet the greater capabilities of the *mujahidin* and make up for the decreasing effectiveness of the Afghan Armed Forces. There is a new commander of the Soviet effort in Afghanistan, General Zaitsev. Soviet troop strength in Afghanistan increased by a few thousand in 1985 to about 118,000, supported by an estimated 30,000 additional troops in the Soviet Central Asian republics north of Afghanistan.

In 1985, Soviet forces displayed an ability to conduct more than one multibattalion assault at a time, although no single operation was as large as the 1984 attack on the Panjsher Valley. The Soviets have demonstrated that they can concentrate troops in strength almost anywhere in the country. However, once these troops have been redeployed elsewhere, the *mujahidin* generally have been able to regain control of the area.

In assuming a greater burden of the war from the ineffective Kabul regime forces, the Soviets were more aggressive this year, concentrating their attacks on resistance supply lines. This more offensive posture, plus the need to react to resistance offensives, produced a higher rate of Soviet casualties and increasing aircraft losses. Soviet casualties in Afghanistan since 1979 total more than 30,000, including more than 10,000 killed. In addition, the Soviets and Afghans together have lost nearly 800 aircraft to the *mujahidin* since the invasion.

Apparently dissatisfied with the performance of its regular troops, Moscow has increased its use of special purpose forces (Spetsnaz). These better trained, more experienced troops use counter-guerrilla tactics and deploy in smaller formations than other units. The Spetsnaz are often active at night and are used to ambush resistance convoys. However, the Soviet Union is unlikely to insert enough of these troops into Afghanistan to affect substantially the course of the war.

Soviet forces in Afghanistan continue to suffer serious morale problems,

although low morale is probably not a major factor in combat. Disease, particularly dysentery and hepatitis, is rampant. Reports of theft and sale of military items, which often end up in the hands of the resistance, are common. Soviet soldiers often use the proceeds to pay for alcohol and drugs, including heroin. Drunkenness is apparently worse than the already high incidence in the U.S.S.R.

Soviet Defectors and Prisoners. In the early years of the conflict, few prisoners were taken by either side. There is no evidence of major detention centers for resistance fighters. Continued press reports of limited actual or planned prisoner exchanges suggest that Kabul and the Soviets do hold some *mujahidin*.

A few Soviets have defected to the resistance; some even fight alongside the *mujahidin*. According to press interviews, Soviet defectors often convert to Islam and go by Muslim names. Some defectors, in trouble before they left Soviet lines, remain with the *mujahidin* rather than face severe punishment, perhaps death, should they return. In addition, various resistance groups hold Soviet prisoners, generally in secure base areas inside Afghanistan.

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) has a program to in-

tern Soviet prisoners in Switzerland and eventually voluntarily repatriate them. Several voluntarily returned to the Soviet Union after completing the waiting period mandated by the Geneva Convention. In 1985, no Soviet soldiers were released through the ICRC. Six Soviet soldiers asked for and received parole admission into the United States in 1983 and 1984; one returned to the U.S.S.R. in 1985.

Soviet Soldier Enters U.S. Embassy. A 19-year old Soviet soldier entered the U.S. Embassy in Kabul on October 31, telling U.S. diplomats that he was fed up "with the soldier's life in Afghanistan" and that he wanted to return to the Soviet Union. Shortly afterward, Afghan and Soviet troops surrounded the embassy, access to it was impeded, and the electricity was cut off. Four days later the soldier agreed to leave with the Soviet Ambassador under the condition that he could return to the Soviet Union and would not be punished beyond a party reprimand. The Soviet Ambassador gave assurances on these points to the U.S. chargé in Kabul. Almost immediately after the soldier's departure the cordon was lifted and power restored. A similar incident occurred in 1980.

SOVIET POLICY AND THE AFGHAN WAR

Moscow continues to pursue a military solution to the Afghanistan problem and uses diplomacy as a means of supporting its efforts to consolidate control in the country. Moscow's diplomatic efforts and those of its Afghan proxies aim at eroding international support for the *mujahidin*, intimidating Afghanistan's neighbors, Iran and Pakistan, and gaining international acceptance for the Kabul regime.

Moscow supports the concept of a political settlement "around Afghanistan" that will maintain and legitimize the client regime in Kabul. The Soviets endorse the continuation of UN-sponsored indirect negotiations in Geneva. Moscow has declined, however, to put forth a withdrawal schedule for the "limited contingent" of Soviet forces in Afghanistan, contending that the timing and other details of such a withdrawal can be negotiated only bilaterally between Moscow and Kabul.



Both politically and militarily, the Soviets appear to have settled in for a long, but limited, war. Over the years they have moderately increased their commitment of troops. They have made extensive adjustments in tactics, equipment, and types of units deployed, as *mujahidin* effectiveness has steadily increased.

Criticism on the Home Front. The scope and duration of the Soviet military effort in Afghanistan has been reflected to a certain extent by developments in the U.S.S.R. Although there is no evidence of widespread opposition, support for the venture in Afghanistan is for the most part passive and unenthusiastic—particularly among those with family members in Afghanistan.

During the past year, however, there have been increasing signs of unhappiness inside the Soviet Union about the Afghan conflict. This dissent has taken several forms. Public demonstrations against service in Afghanistan have taken place in Armenia, Georgia, Ukraine, and other republics. Draft evasion appears to have increased, prompting the Soviet authorities to issue new laws punishing those failing to register. *Samizdat* criticism (privately circulated dissident manuscripts) has expanded, including both negative reports from Afghanistan veterans and open expressions of sympathy for the *mujahidin* by Crimean Tartar leaders. Complaints about the war have become more frequent and open and are implicitly acknowledged by coverage in the Soviet press. Unofficial polls conducted by human rights activists show a decline in support for the war.

To generate more support, the Soviet media have expanded their coverage of the fighting. Combat fatalities are now reported more frequently; decorations for heroism played up; and special features on men fighting in Afghanistan are carried in their home town newspapers. Not all coverage is upbeat—Soviet spokesmen have said that the fighting is “intensifying,” a clear indication that Moscow is preparing its own people for a long struggle. At Geneva, a Soviet spokesman publicly admitted to a sharp increase in casualties in Afghanistan in 1985.

THE AFGHAN REGIME

The Afghan regime remains ineffective, with little future prospect of becoming a viable surrogate capable of standing on its own.

The Kabul regime remains essentially a city state—with military outposts in the hinterland and a secure civilian presence only in Kabul and a few other towns. Both Herat and Qandahar are substantially out of regime control. DRA performance, and particularly its efforts to build legitimacy or a political base, are limited by its reach. Najibullah, ex-director of KHAD, admitted to an Indian journalist that only 35% of the country was under control of the regime. The true figure is uncertain but probably closer to the 10% often cited by the resistance than to the KHAD estimate.

Party Developments

The DRA is nominally ruled through the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA). The party is riven by deep-seated divisions, which frequently, although perhaps not as much as in previous years, erupt into violence. The most serious incident reported in 1985 was a September gunbattle between army adherents of the rival Khalq and Parcham factions at the Arg palace in Kabul. The Soviets have spared no effort to integrate the party factions, going back to the early 1970s, but regime and party changes in 1985 appear to have shifted the balance of power still further away from the Khalq.

Babrak's Parcham faction holds most state power, although its Dari-speaking, multiethnic, urbanized adherents still comprise only 40% of the party. It controls KHAD, an important source of leverage.

The Khalq faction was headed by Presidents Taraki and Amin, both killed in 1979. The Khalq is currently led by Interior Minister Gulabzoi, who controls the regular police and was promoted this year to Lieutenant General. Khalqis are mostly Pashtu speakers (Pathans) from eastern areas, often from a lower class or rural background. Still a majority of party members, Khalqis predominate in the armed forces, which makes them resistant to being purged. In the past, the Khalqis had a reputation for being more radical and nationalist than the Soviet-sponsored Parchamis.

Factional differences probably contributed to a major regime personnel change, announced on June 3, when Najibullah Masir replaced Mohammed Ismail Danesh as Minister of Mines and Industries. Danesh, a Khalqi, has taken up respectable political exile as Afghanistan's Ambassador to Libya. Three new appointments were announced the same day, all with the rank of minister. Abdulbasir Ranjbir was named head of the Central Bank, Mohammed Daoud Kauian was named Director General of the official Bakhtar News Agency, and Abdul Qadr Ashna, Director of the State Committee for Culture, was elevated to Cabinet status. Ashna is a reputed Parchami; the other new ministers probably had similar affiliations.

At the opening session of the 16th plenum of the PDPA Central Committee on November 21, a party reshuffle was announced, the first in 3 years. Ghulam Dastgir Panjsheri was dropped from the politburo and Danesh and former Defense Minister Abdul Qadir—a key figure in the 1978 coup—were replaced as alternate or candidate members. *Radio Kabul* said that Qadir and Panjsheri asked to be removed because of illness, but there is no evidence that they suffer from any physical infirmity; for Qadir it is the end of a long slide downward. Defense Minister Nazar Mohammed and Tribal Affairs Minister Suleiman Laeeq were named as candidate members of the politburo.

Najibullah was named secretary of the PDPA Central Committee, a sign of the increasing power of the secret police. KHAD's position was further improved by the promotion of Najibullah's deputy, Ghulam Faruq Yacubi, from candidate member of the Central Committee to full member. Saifullah, Kabul City *sarandoy* (militia) commander, and a possible Gulabzoi protege, also was appointed candidate member of the Central Committee. On December 5, *Radio Kabul* announced that Yacubi had been named as KHAD's new director.

The PDPA marked its 20th anniversary in January with major celebrations in Kabul. The Soviet's supplied as guest of honor the first secretary of the Communist Party of Uzbekistan. The only member of a ruling party politburo present was from Poland.

After the celebrations, party affairs appeared to become secondary to the questions of regime performance. Con-

linuing Soviet dissatisfaction with Karmal was apparent when he was accorded low-level treatment on a May visit to Moscow, his first state visit since a trip to Mongolia in July 1983. Karmal went from the U.S.S.R. to Poland, where his reception was subdued. A week before Karmal's arrival in Moscow, on the occasion of the Saur (April) Afghan revolution's seventh anniversary, Soviet commentary was lukewarm and appeared to downgrade the status of the PDPA. A second Karmal trip to Moscow, ostensibly for medical treatment, was equally downplayed.

Rumors of Karmal's impending replacement surfaced several times during the year, especially in connection with his shabby treatment abroad. Potential successors mentioned include Prime Minister Sultan Ali Keshtmand, an able administrator and party loyalist who is hampered by being a Hazara, Afghanistan's lowest status ethnic group. Another party leader, Nur Ahmed Nur, spent 2 years in Moscow for a training course and returned to Kabul, apparently for good, in September.

Another organization that has not succeeded in mobilizing support for the regime is the National Fatherland Front (NFF). The NFF is charged with bringing together various regime front organizations, such as the Democratic Youth of Afghanistan, in a patriotic, nonparty context. In March, high-level party figure Saleh Mohammed Ziray was replaced as NFF chairman by Abdul Rahim Hatef, a Pathan tribal elder who served in Afghanistan's parliament during the monarchy. Although named to head *Loyah Jirga*, Hatef has added little to the regime's appeal.

The Regime Strives for Legitimacy

With little prospect of improved party performance or appeal, Kabul has tried to build a facade of legitimacy for the regime through a series of public initiatives. The regime was stung by criticism in the Ermacora report (see human rights section below), specifically its reference to Afghanistan's lack of even the formality of representative institutions. Kabul's political initiative may, therefore, have been packaged more for international than domestic consumption.

Loyah Jirga. On April 12, Kabul announced it would call a *Loyah Jirga*, the traditional grand assembly of Afghan tribal leaders. Such assemblages historically were used by the Afghan

kings and by the prerevolution republican government to gain acquiescence in a transfer of power or approval of a major new policy.

In the 1980 *Fundamental Principles of the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan*, which serves as an interim constitution, the *Loyah Jirga* is defined as the "highest organ of state power." Neither the Karmal regime, nor the preinvasion Khalq government had previously convoked a *Loyah Jirga*, although regional *jirgas* have been held. Reports of the event suggest that the *Loyah Jirga* was a sham and that it was recognized as such by the Afghan people.

A high percentage of the 2,000 participants were regime functionaries, from the military or KHAD, or members of the PDPA or its various front organizations. The hurried scheduling of the sessions belies the assertion of active participation. The regime announced it was calling the *Loyah Jirga* on April 12. On the 13th, Kabul announced that "elections for *Jirga* representatives had already been held in 13 of the 29 provinces." By April 20th the elections were pronounced complete—only then was the April 23 meeting date announced.

The "independent" delegates were paid well for attending—reportedly 20,000 Afghanis per delegate and up to 50,000 for those who agreed to speak during the televised sessions. Many were coerced into appearing. The regime took a hard line at the sessions, denouncing the resistance as "antirevolutionaries." The role of Pathan and Baluch border tribes (delegates were in attendance from both Pakistan and Iran) in staving off "outside interference" was stressed.

The resistance responded quickly. At a press conference in Peshawar, a group of party leaders from both then-existing coalitions strongly condemned the meeting, threatening vengeance on the participants. Resistance threats were not idle. A Bakhtar flight carrying delegates from Badakhshan was reportedly shot down April 15. A number of delegates apparently were killed in the aftermath of the *Loyah Jirga*. At least two may have had their hands cut off, the Islamic punishment for chiefs.

In August, the initiative was renewed in the same unconvincing manner

when local council elections were announced—the day before they were to begin. In Kabul, the "election" process was simple: a smattering of district residents were assembled at a meeting hall—some unwillingly. Candidates, usually one per seat, were introduced only moments before the vote. Rather than by secret ballot, voting meant raising hands under the watchful eyes of KHAD agents. The regime announced that 450,000 Kabul residents participated, about 90% of eligible voters.

Within a week there were reports of council members killed by the *mujahidin*. Nevertheless, council meetings were reported being held by the end of August. The regime announced plans to hold similar elections around the country.

The regime once again focused on the frontier in a September 17 High Tribal *Jirga* for the Pathan and Baluch tribes whose territories span the borders with Pakistan and, in the case of the Baluch, also with Iran. This time a somewhat higher proportion of the roughly 3,700 delegates were actually from the tribes. The regime's "prize" defector, Asmatullah Achakzai, was elected to the presidium of the *Jirga*, and again, delegates were reportedly paid well to attend. Cash payments probably were supplemented by arms, in the traditional manner of government-tribal relations. The weapons were reportedly for use in defending the frontiers and presumably also for use in tribal lands across the border. There is no evidence that the regime has gained any adherents as a result of these subventions.

On November 7, on the eve of the UN General Assembly vote on Afghanistan and the U.S.-U.S.S.R. summit, the DRA announced a new initiative designed to "broaden the social pillars" of the revolution. Karmal indicated a readiness for dialogue with the opposition and even the possibility of bringing into the government opposition figures who accept the April revolution. Thus far there have been no takers.

On November 11 Babrak Karmal paid a 1-day visit to Konduz City, in northern Afghanistan. Accompanied by the heads of KHAD and the Ministries of Interior and Defense, it was his first trip to the provinces in more than 2 years. Later that week, Prime Minister Keshtmand reportedly made an equally rare 1-day trip to Herat.

Economy

The war has caused significant damage to the Afghan economy, already one of the world's poorest. The resistance has focused on disrupting Afghanistan's small industrial sector, which even before the 1978 coup was mostly state owned. The Soviets and the regime, largely in the course of fighting, also have disrupted agricultural production and food distribution.

In a January 1985 speech, President Karmal charged that the resistance has caused more than \$350 million in damage. He claimed that the *mujahidin* have destroyed 1,800 school buildings, 31 hospitals, hundreds of trucks, 14,000 kilometers of telephone lines, and hundreds of electricity pylons.

Nevertheless, there is considerable evidence that the economy continues to function in much of the country. Disruption of agriculture has been confined mostly to areas of heavy fighting and population movement, i.e., the eastern provinces bordering Pakistan. In much of the rest of the country, as noted below, farming and herding continue to provide at least subsistence to the rural population.

Trade continues with Pakistan, India, and elsewhere, much of it outside government hands. Neither the government nor the resistance has tried significantly to disrupt nonwar-related commerce out of concern that the population might turn against the side that reduces the standard of living.

Neither black market differential nor inflation is high enough to suggest severe economic disruption. The unofficial rate for the Afghani has risen slightly to about 130 to the dollar, above the official rate of 50.6. Inflation in the cities has continued to run at about 25% annually, fed by occasional shortages that bid prices upward. A major factor limiting the rate of inflation is that the Soviets bring in a wide variety of goods, including wheat and other foodstuffs, for distribution in areas under their control.

Continuing Sovietization of the Economy. In 1984 Soviet-Afghan trade was up slightly, totaling about \$1.1 billion, about 70%-80% of total Afghan trade. Trade is in approximate balance as Afghan natural gas continues to be pumped to the Soviet Union, despite occasional resistance disruptions.

The merger of Ariana Afghan Airlines into the domestic Bakhtar Airlines provides an example of Soviet



Mujahidin with RPG-7, the basic antitank weapon of the resistance.

efforts to displace Western economic influence. As part of the transition, Ariana sold its single DC-10 jetliner; other Western-manufactured aircraft also may be replaced by aircraft from the Soviet bloc; at the end of 1985, Bakhtar's Boeing 727s were still flying.

Soviet aid. In 1984, the Soviets pledged more than \$300 million in new aid and disbursed more than \$400 million in commodities and new project aid. In February 1985 an agreement was signed granting additional project credits. The U.S.S.R. has provided Afghanistan with assistance unprecedented in Soviet relations with Third-World countries, including about two-thirds of its total program of grants, long payment terms for credits, and commodity support—even wheat, which the Soviet Union itself must import.

Much of this Soviet largesse is actually designed to support the military effort, particularly aid-financed expenditures for transportation infrastructure. In addition, a substantial portion of the commodity credits appears to be for war-related material (such as trucks or petroleum) for the Afghan Armed Forces. East European aid is much lower; only \$12 million in new aid was extended in 1984.

Agriculture in 1985

Afghanistan is a country of dry, mountainous terrain, mostly unsuitable for agriculture. Less than 15% of the total land area is arable, and up to one-half of the arable land normally is left fallow each year. Only about 4 million hectares

(10 million acres) are cultivated annually. Precipitation varies considerably, but in most areas it is neither adequate nor reliable enough to support extensive farming. Agriculture depends heavily on irrigation from the few permanently flowing rivers, snow and ice melt, and underground water reserves.

Subsistence agriculture dominates Afghanistan's economy. It employs roughly three-quarters of the working population and accounts for more than half of the gross domestic product. Relatively little use is made of machines, chemical fertilizer, or pesticides. Wheat made up nearly half of all agricultural production before the war; this proportion has probably increased.

Afghanistan suffered from unusually low amounts of precipitation in 1984 and the first few months of 1985. Drought reduced production, particularly in the dryland regions in the north, and probably contributed to local food deficits. However, the situation may have eased later in 1985, after unusually high amounts of precipitation fell in the spring. Wheat production in 1985 was probably about equal to average preinvasion production and above the annual average since the invasion.

The net effect of the conflict in Afghanistan on food availability has been to wear away at the margin of agricultural production. Isolated food shortages continue to exist, particularly in those areas where agriculture has been severely disrupted by the war, and

are exacerbated by the poor transport network. Food continues to be imported both from the U.S.S.R. and Pakistan. Grain has been substituted for cash crops. Traditional Afghan exports of fruit and vegetables have diminished. Opium, which requires less attention, and is therefore safer to grow, is an exception. Opium production increased in 1985, particularly in the east.

Education and Youth

The effort to educate and influence Afghanistan's youth is an important element in the long-term Soviet program to pacify and Sovietize Afghanistan.¹ In practice this includes using education and the reduction of Afghanistan's over-

¹See forthcoming Department of State publication on DRA-Soviet efforts to win over Afghan youth.

whelming illiteracy as a means to gain acceptance for Marxist ideology, the Kabul regime, and Soviet hegemony. To rule the country in the future, the Soviets need to develop at least a small cadre that can succeed to leadership of the DRA. The greatest constraint on these efforts is the lack of physical control over most of the population. Although the Soviets thus far have made little progress on literacy or recruitment, they may have gained the loyalty of a few young people in Kabul, particularly among those working for KHAD.

The Soviets have encouraged universal, compulsory education in the areas they control. In the schools, the study of Islam and Western languages has largely been replaced by the study of Marxist ideology and the Russian language. As many as one-third of Afghanistan's teachers and school administrators may

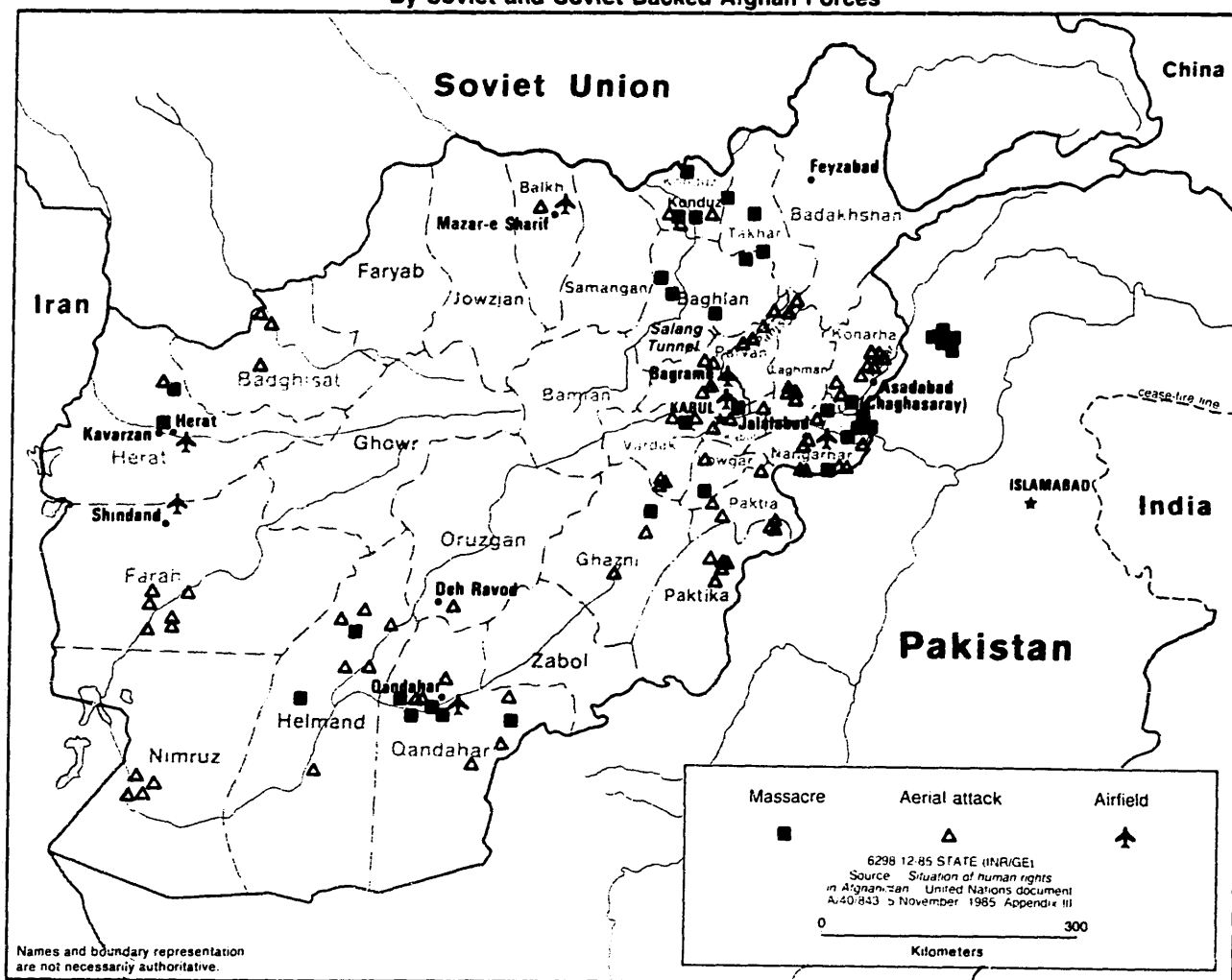
be Soviet or bloc nationals, while most of the rest are PDPA members. In February 1985, language teachers from France and West Germany were expelled, ending 60 years of educational cooperation with those countries.

An important part of this strategy is to send Afghans to the U.S.S.R. for training. However, returning students vary greatly in their loyalty to the regime or to the Soviets. With adults sometimes more hostile to the Marxists after a stay in the U.S.S.R., the Soviets have brought children aged 10 or younger north for extended periods of up to 10 years or more. Many are orphans of regime or party personnel.

Human Rights

The 1984 session of the UN Human Rights Commission asked Austrian Professor Felix Ermacora, as the commission's special rapporteur, to report on the human rights situation in

AFGHANISTAN: KNOWN MASSACRES & AERIAL ATTACKS ON VILLAGES By Soviet and Soviet Backed Afghan Forces



Afghanistan. Although the DRA refused him entry, Ermacora was able to interview in Pakistan refugees from over half of Afghanistan's provinces. His report, presented to the Human Rights Commission in March 1985, was highly critical of the Soviet Union and the Kabul regime.

Ermacora found massive and systematic violation of human rights in Afghanistan. He noted that "Since the April Revolution, the internal human rights situation has deteriorated as a result of the absence of popular participation in the choice and administration of government." This situation produced internal conflict and the mass exodus of refugees. "Many lives have been lost, many people have been incarcerated in conditions far removed from respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, many have been tortured and have disappeared."

Ermacora detailed his political observations, adding, "The regime which was installed in December 1979, like its immediate predecessors, was a regime that was not elected by the people and which had never submitted to a free expression of will by the population and was therefore unrepresentative." He recommended the initiation of a process of political normalization, specifically including the convocation of a *Loyal Jirga*.

The Soviet representative to the Human Rights Commission responded with a barrage of vituperation aimed at discrediting Ermacora's integrity. Nonetheless, the report was acclaimed by the international press.

The 1985 Human Rights Commission extended Ermacora's mandate for another year, asking him to update his initial report and submit an interim draft to the 40th session of the UN General Assembly. After approval by the Human Rights Commission and the UN Economic and Social Council, the Ermacora report was presented to the General Assembly and circulated as a UN document.² Based on the report, a resolution condemning the violation of human rights in Afghanistan was approved by the General Assembly. This is the first time that the General Assembly has had the opportunity to vote on this issue. Ermacora will convey the final version of the report to the

UN Human Rights Commission in March 1986.

Violations of human rights in Afghanistan continued in 1985. Reprisals by Soviet forces against Afghan civilians took on added ferocity with the increased involvement of Soviet troops in the fighting. Due to the savagery of these attacks, Afghan regime soldiers on more than one occasion tried to prevent or limit them.

Some anticivilian attacks were especially large. In early February, for instance, hundreds of civilians were reported killed near Konduz City, north of the Salang Pass. In late March, Soviet soldiers, reportedly drunk, allegedly turned a house-to-house search into a looting spree. When residents protested, the soldiers opened fire, killing 17. Also in March, retaliatory attacks in Laghman Province caused nearly 1,000 civilian casualties; in April, hundreds were reported killed when a meeting in a village square was machinegunned.

THE AFGHAN RESISTANCE

The Afghan resistance consists of several elements. Seven major parties in exile—now joined in a single alliance—represent refugee interest and work to promote the political dimension of the resistance (see box, p. 14). They coordinate their activities with *mujahidin* groups inside Afghanistan. In addition to the seven major parties in Peshawar, there are smaller groupings of every political stripe. Parties representing the Shia minority tend to be based in Quetta, in southern Pakistan, and in Iran.

Mujahidin fighters appear to have become increasingly professionalized over the past year. Most, but not all, of the hundreds of separate fighting groups are linked, to at least some degree, to one or more of the major parties. Ordinary Afghan citizens provide support and manpower and sometimes stage their own actions against the regime and the Soviets. Soviet reprisals have generated more caution in the behavior of civilians but in many cases have hardened attitudes toward the occupiers. Finally, there are many sympathizers among those living under regime control, including those employed by the DRA, whose anti-regime activities became more visible in 1985.

Intergroup tension continued to be a problem for the resistance, at times

reflecting traditional tribal or ethnic squabbles, sometimes disputes over turf or supplies. Pressure from a population that is slowly gaining a national consciousness as a result of the war has contributed to a probable reduction in intergroup combat. In many sectors, particularly in Helmand, Paktia, Herat, and around Panjsher, fighting groups displayed increased cooperation without regard to party or ethnic affiliation.

THE REGIONAL ENVIRONMENT

Border Violations. Violations of the Pakistani border by DRA, and possibly Soviet, aircraft and artillery again escalated in 1985. There were more than 200 DRA/Soviet violations of Pakistani airspace and more than 25 instances of shelling Pakistani territory. Incidents on the Iranian/Afghan border also occurred. As in previous years, cross-border strikes generally were related to combat taking place near the border inside Afghanistan. There was no single incident as large as the 1984 bomb attacks on Teri Mangal.

Violations were especially numerous around Arandu, opposite Barikot, and all along the tribal areas bordering Paktia Province. One of the worst attacks occurred during the height of the Soviet offensive in the Konar Valley. On May 31, Soviet/Afghan aircraft bombed and rocketed Swir, a village in northern Pakistan, about 20 miles from the border, where 11 civilians died and 32 were wounded.

Pakistan. Pakistan remains stalwart in its support of the Afghan people, both in caring for the refugees and in taking the lead, as at the United Nations, in working for a settlement of the Afghan problem. In his opening speech to the newly elected National Assembly on March 25, President Mohammed Zia ul-Haq stressed Pakistan's continuing and long-term commitment to the Afghan people. Although Pakistan remains susceptible to continuing Soviet/DRA pressure along the border—including a recent upsurge of subversion—a wide consensus evidently exists in favor of the government's efforts to resolve the Afghan crisis.

Iran. Relations between Iran and the DRA remained cool throughout 1985, following a distinct downturn in relations between the two countries in 1984. The Iranian consulate in Herat remains closed as does the Afghan consulate in Mashhad. Moreover, the Iranians have continued to complain of periodic border violations during the

²*Situation of human rights in Afghanistan.* Report of the Economic and Social Council, UN General Assembly document A/40/843, November 5, 1985. Amnesty International, the Helsinki Watch Committee, and the U.S. Department of State also prepared reports on the human rights situation in Afghanistan in 1985.

year. In June, the Iranians brought several Afghan Shia resistance groups to Qom. They were addressed by Ayatollah Montazari, Khomeini's designated heir, who encouraged these groups to stop fighting among themselves and concentrate on the invaders.

India. In an address to a joint session of the U.S. Congress in June 1985, and on several other occasions during the year, Prime Minister Gandhi reiterated India's interest in a political solution to the Afghan problem. Bali Ram Baghat, later to be named foreign minister, led a Congress Party delegation to the January PDPA 20th anniversary celebrations. In April, Indian Foreign Secretary Bhandari visited Kabul as part of a trip to all South Asian capitals. A joint statement at the end of the visit expressed support for the UN-sponsored negotiations and concern at increasing militarization of the region. DRA Foreign Minister Shah Mohammad Dost later paid a return visit to Delhi and negotiated an increase in the modest Indian program of non-military assistance to the DRA. India continues to call for an end to foreign intervention and interference in Afghanistan. In 1985, India voted against the release of the Ermacora report in the UN Human Rights Commission and once again abstained on the General Assembly resolution. India also continued to express to Moscow its concern over the situation in Afghanistan.

China. China continues to condemn the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan, citing it as a major obstacle to the improvement of its own relations with the U.S.S.R. In a February 22 press conference, the DRA denounced Chinese support for the Afghan resistance, setting off a media dispute that went on for much of the year. On February 21, the official Chinese *People's Daily* called the DRA charges slander, stating that Soviet actions in Afghanistan represented a threat to Chinese security.

REFUGEES

Pakistan. Afghans in Pakistan constitute the single largest group of refugees in the world. The Government of Pakistan reports registration of over 2.6 million Afghans; numbers continue to grow, although at a slower pace than in years past. Most refugees are located in some 306 camps, primarily in the rural areas of the North West Frontier Province (NWFP) and Baluchistan (see map, p. 6).

The New Resistance Alliance

At a May 16 press conference, Malvi Yunus Khalis, widely respected head of one of the major resistance parties, announced the merger of the two then-existing alliances in Peshawar. The existing seven-party "fundamentalist" and three-party "moderate" alliances became a single coalition. Splinter groups from the three-party alliance also ceased to exist, making a total of seven parties. The alliance kept the same name—Islamic Unity of Afghan Mujahidin—previously used by both coalitions.

Pressure to form the new alliance came from supporters both inside and outside the country and from the parties themselves. Infighting among the parties, often within the coalitions, had frequently turned into violent clashes both in Afghanistan and Peshawar. Intensive discussions on possible new alignments had been going on for more than a year when the agreement was struck.

The new coalition's primary goal is to present a unified stance to the world, particularly to international bodies such as the United Nations and the Islamic Conference Organization. A key feature of the alliance is that it is represented by a single spokesman—a position rotated among the party leaders at regular intervals, probably quarterly. Decisions must be unanimous. A standing committee will try to increase military cooperation. Other committees are to focus on political issues, education, and social services. The seven parties agreed to respect continued differences over their views on Afghanistan's future.

The alliance is run by a council comprised of the leaders of the seven component parties.

• The "fundamentalists": Gulbuddin Hekmatyar's *Hezb-e-Islami*; the *Hezb-e-Islami* faction of Yunus Khalis; the *Jamiat-e-Islami* headed by Burhamuddin Rabbani; the *Ittihadia* led by Abdul Rasool Sayyid

• The "traditionalists," sometimes called moderates: the *Harakat-e-Inqilab* of Nabi Mohammed; the *Makhs-e-Milli* of Pir Sayyid Gailani; and the *Jab-e-Najat-e-Milli* led by Sibghatullah Mojadeddi

Yunus Khalis was the initial spokesman. He delivered a second statement in August asserting the alliance's role as representative of the Afghan people and demanding Afghanistan's UN seat, currently occupied by DRA. Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, who succeeded Khalis as spokesman, led an alliance delegation, including a representative from each of the seven parties, to the United Nations and several friendly countries in October-November. During the UN visit, the first international mission of the alliance, unity was maintained and the role of the spokesman respected by the other delegates. The alliance pressed its case further on November 21, when spokesman Gulbuddin urged friendly countries to transfer Afghan diplomatic missions from DRA control to the resistance; Gulbuddin also has demanded the Afghan seat in the Islamic Conference Organization.

Progress in developing resistance cooperation through the alliance has been relatively swift, although genuine unity remains illusive. Agreed alliance statements have been few—as could be expected. There is no provision for representation by other parties or organized groups within or outside Afghanistan. However, despite the many obstacles, the alliance is expected to play a progressively greater role in presenting the Afghan case to the world—and to help increase coordination among the resistance inside Afghanistan.

Traditional notions of hospitality and strong ethnic and tribal ties between the local inhabitants and the refugees have helped to ease the Afghans' impact on the local population. However, their presence has led to an undercurrent of uneasiness, which is greater outside the areas of ethnic affinity where most of the refugees reside.

The herds of goats, camels, and sheep that the refugees bring with them destroy, through overgrazing, land in the already economically depressed areas of the NWFP and Baluchistan. Also, the refugees compete with the local population for a limited number of jobs. In recent years more than 2 million Pakistani males, some from the NWFP, have emigrated to work in Persian Gulf countries where wages are much higher than in Pakistan. Diminished employment prospects in the gulf, however, have led some of these workers to return to Pakistan. There could well be increased competition for jobs—and rising friction—between the returning Pakistanis and the Afghan refugees in an economy already experiencing high unemployment.

The Soviets and KHAD attempt to exploit Pakistani concern over the refugees. KHAD infiltrators are on the rise, although most have been apprehended by the Pakistani authorities. Several violent incidents in the refugee areas can be attributed to Soviet/KHAD actions designed to increase host-refugee tensions. Late 1985 saw a marked rise in attempted Soviet/DRA subversion in Pakistan's tribal areas along the border.

Refugee Assistance. Pakistan has extended an impressive and continuing welcome to the Afghans. The refugees are subject to few restrictions and are allowed to travel freely, hold jobs, and establish businesses. The refugees are minimally, but adequately, supplied with food, shelter, clothing, and medicine. Relief is provided by Pakistan and by the international community primarily through the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the World Food Program (WFP).

In keeping with Government of Pakistan policy, a number of relief organizations have expanded their programming to include projects that address the longer term needs of a population with no immediate prospect of voluntary repatriation. Greater emphasis is now placed on enhancing refugee self-reliance through programs providing

both general education and vocational training. Special efforts are being made to provide female refugees with income-generating skills compatible with local customs. The World Bank, in conjunction with the UNHCR, also has launched a series of forestation, irrigation, and road-building projects designed to employ refugee labor in repairing environmental damage caused by the Afghans' presence.

The U.S. Government contributed about \$66 million to the WFP/UNHCR Afghan refugee relief program in Pakistan in fiscal year 1985, including \$38 million worth of commodities through the WFP—about one-third of total international contributions to Afghan relief. To date, total U.S. contributions to the Afghan program exceed \$430 million. Other major contributors to the UN relief program are Japan, Western Europe, Saudi Arabia, and other Persian Gulf states.

Humanitarian Relief. In addition to U.S. funding of assistance to Afghan refugees in Pakistan, the U.S. Government also has provided a total of \$8 million in fiscal year 1985 for short-term humanitarian relief for war-affected Afghans in Afghanistan. This included \$4 million of medical supplies and food aid disbursed by the U.S. Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance. A second \$4 million portion funded medical, education, and other projects by private voluntary organizations. The objective of the humanitarian assistance program is

to improve the ability of the Afghan people to sustain themselves inside Afghanistan.

A long-term program of U.S. humanitarian assistance for war-affected Afghans began in the fall of 1985. Economic Support Funds totaling \$15 million have been earmarked for this purpose by Congress in the fiscal year 1986 foreign assistance authorization. Although still being designed, the new program includes the provision of additional food, educational assistance, and medical supplies and training, and for the improvement of livestock and agriculture (partly through the distribution of seeds and farm implements).

Congress has separately authorized \$10 million for the transportation of excess Defense Department property of a nonweapons, nonlethal nature to war-affected Afghans.

Iran. The second largest concentration of Afghan refugees outside Pakistan is in Iran. The Iranian Government estimates that there are as many as 1.8 million Afghans within its borders, half of them located in the eastern Provinces of Khorasan and Sistan-Baluchistan. Most Afghans in Iran are integrated into the local population. However, the government does provide assistance through the Council for Afghan Refugees. The UNHCR also operates a small program, budgeted at \$10 million in 1986; UNHCR plans to emphasize activities that will promote



Basic food rations are provided to the Afghan refugees by the international community.

refugee self-sufficiency. The United States does not contribute to this program.

INTERNATIONAL CONCERN

The plight of the Afghan people has not escaped the world's attention. Countries throughout the world took special notice of the fifth anniversary of the Soviet invasion in December 1984. Many governments made formal statements condemning the Soviet occupation. Strong expressions of solidarity and support were made by many Muslim countries and by a wide variety of groups around the world.

The carefully orchestrated 12th World Festival of Youth and Students, held in Moscow from July 27 to August 3, was disrupted by protests from several delegations against the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan. Swedish delegate Katarina Larsson, who was working in Afghanistan at the time of the invasion, spoke of a growing solidarity movement for Afghanistan. She stated that protests would increase "until the last Russian soldier has left Afghanistan." Soviet interpreters disrupted her presentation and censored her references to Soviet aggression.³

International press coverage in 1985 also was higher than at any time since the days immediately after the invasion. Press interest in and reporting of resistance operations increased. This was in marked contrast to the relatively rare coverage of the situation inside regime-controlled areas. Few independent journalists are permitted entry, and they are given little scope to probe conditions in the country.

Soviet concern with foreign media coverage led Soviet Ambassador to

Pakistan Vitaly Smirnov to complain about foreign correspondents accompanying the *mujahidin*. He threatened that Western reporters entering the war zone could meet a grim fate.

On the night of September 19, *Arizona Republic* correspondent Charles Thornton became the first American known to be killed inside Afghanistan since the Soviet invasion. Thornton was traveling by truck north of Qandahar in the company of some 15 Afghans when the group was ambushed by a Soviet/DRA unit.

The Department of State has issued a warning against travel in Afghanistan because of the danger and because the U.S. Government is not able, in a hostile war zone, to provide consular protection for American citizens.

UN NEGOTIATIONS

Since January 1980, the UN General Assembly has voted seven times, each by overwhelming margins, for a resolution expressing grave concern at the continuing foreign armed intervention in Afghanistan and calling for the complete withdrawal of foreign forces; the restoration of Afghanistan's independent and nonaligned status; self-determination; and the creation of conditions that would enable the refugees to return home with safety and honor.

The resolution, introduced as in the past by Pakistan, and cosponsored by 46 other countries, passed again on November 13, 1985. It was adopted by a vote of 122 to 19, with 12 abstentions, the widest margin to date.

UN attempts to negotiate a settlement date from a November 1980 mandate of the General Assembly. Negotiations, held periodically since 1982 in Geneva, are led by UN Under Secretary General for Special Political Affairs Diego Cordovez as a personal representative of the Secretary General. Cordovez shuttles between delegations from Pakistan and Afghanistan, officially informing Iran of the discussions while unofficially informing the Soviets. Three rounds of indirect talks were scheduled during 1985, from June 20 to June 25, August 27 to August 30, and December 16 through December 20.

The parties all reported progress at the June session. Undersecretary Cor-

dovez described the talks as "fruitful." The UN has reported agreement on three of four proposed accords, the first dealing with noninterference in Afghanistan's affairs, the second encompassing international guarantees of a final settlement, and the third governing the voluntary return of the refugees. But discussion of a fourth agreement dealing with the key issue of a Soviet troop withdrawal and the interrelationship between that document and the other three, was blocked in August when Afghanistan demanded direct negotiations with Pakistan in place of the "proximity" format. Pakistan has refused to negotiate directly with the Kar-mal regime.

Despite hopes generated at various points in the negotiations, the sides remain far apart. The Soviet Union has not substantially altered its original position justifying its presence in Afghanistan. But all sides are committed to continuing the talks.

U.S. POLICY

U.S. Government policy on Afghanistan remains unchanged. We strongly oppose the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan and seek the earliest possible negotiated political settlement based on the principles encompassed in the seven General Assembly resolutions.

The United States supports the ongoing UN-sponsored negotiations and is prepared to guarantee a comprehensive and balanced settlement, consistent with the General Assembly's resolutions and predicated on a complete withdrawal of Soviet forces within a fixed and reasonable length of time. ■

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³For details about protests at the festival see Department of State Foreign Affairs Note, "Update: 12th World Youth Festival in Moscow," December 1985.